

## **Guidance to applicants for NIHR Flexibility & Sustainability Funding (FSF)**

**Please read carefully before completing the application form:**

### **Background**

NIHR FSF is a funding stream introduced by DH in 2008 in order to attract, develop and retain the research workforce necessary for delivering high-quality health research. NIHR FSF has been made available to research-active NHS organisations (referred to as “Standard” and “Priming” FSF) and also to all NIHR Research Networks. This application is for the **Network FSF** allocated to the West Anglia CLRN. The total funding available to this CLRN in Network FSF in 2009/10 is £108,491. It is unlikely that the CLRN Executive will consider bids in excess of £45,000 for one application.

NIHR FSF is awarded to current or potential NIHR Faculty members. NIHR Faculty members are individuals who conduct or support patient- or people-based research, and whose salary is funded in part or in whole from an NIHR funding stream, and who are employed by an NHS organisation or by a university. There are four categories of NIHR Faculty membership: Investigators, Senior Investigators, Associates and Trainees.

NIHR Associates are those Faculty members who support research led by others. All individuals whose salary is funded (partly or wholly) by an NIHR Clinical Research Network are NIHR Associates, including clinicians recruiting patients to UKCRN Portfolio studies, research nurses (or equivalent for other health professions, e.g. physiotherapists, psychologists) and associated staff, and clinical support staff, e.g. pharmacy, imaging, and pathology staff. *See link at the end of this document for more information and definitions on NIHR Faculty membership.*

Applicants can apply on behalf of other people or can make applications for their own salary costs. However, where the applicant is applying for his/her own salary cost the application will need to be accompanied by the signature of a line manager.

NIHR FSF will only support salary costs: these can include direct (i.e. salary) and indirect (e.g. payroll, HR) costs. NIHR FSF cannot be used for non-staff costs, such as equipment or running costs, and HEI Full Economic Costing cannot be applied. Please note that the funding will be made to the organisation where the staff costs are incurred. For example, if a university employee incorporates the cost of an NHS employee in the application the FSF funding for that NHS employee will be sent to the NHS organisation where s/he is employed and not to the university.

NIHR FSF is intended to support flexibility and sustainability in the workforce contributing to UKCRN portfolio studies supported by the Comprehensive Local Research Network. It cannot be used as the long-term, primary source of funding for any member of staff, and therefore NIHR FSF should be attached to an individual for a specified period of time which should not exceed 12 months.

### **Funding Criteria**

Network NIHR FSF can be used to support the salary costs of the following:

- **The component of an NIHR Faculty member’s salary which is not covered by other NIHR sources;**  
*[Network-related FSF should support NIHR Associates. NIHR Associates are staff that are supporting Portfolio studies and therefore whose salary could be supported from both TCRN/CLRN infrastructure funding and NIHR FSF. There must, however, be no ‘double funding’ of the same salary cost. NIHR FSF allocation would allow the TCRN/CLRN to support these staff during periods of low portfolio activity (local or national), for instance].*
- **New staff, who are expected to be Faculty members, but who have not yet obtained funding from the other NIHR sources;**  
*[Network-related NIHR FSF could support people who are not yet fully active because they may not have the relevant experience but who have the potential to contribute to Portfolio*

*activity in the future in the view of the TCRN/CLRN Director and their management team. This could relate to activity in areas of existing research activity and areas for development. It could also be used to provide training to allow staff to develop the skills to become research active, e.g. additional training to move individuals towards being NIHR Faculty members (support for MSc courses, PhD, MD study), funding for periods of mentorship for clinicians, or to enable clinicians in academic departments to enable others to become research active as NIHR Faculty members.]*

- **Existing Faculty members who are “between grants”;**  
*[It is expected that network staff will contribute to a number of studies in their specialty area or hospital/practice. The time spent supporting these studies may vary depending on a number of factors such as variations in numbers of eligible patients (planned and unplanned) and delays associated with studies closing before a new study opens. Network-related NIHR FSF could provide funding to support network staff during less active periods and thus help maintain stability within the network workforce. This is applicable for any type of staff.]*
- **The time of Faculty members in contributing to the wider research endeavour (e.g. membership of peer review panels);**  
In a CLRN context this would include involvement in Specialty Groups or Clinical Research/Studies Groups; contribution to other national groups or projects; provision of expert advice.
- **The research-related time of NHS-employed administrative and secretarial staff who are supporting Faculty members in their NIHR-related work.**

**Please note:** The NIHR CRN CC have made it clear that NIHR FSF supplied by NIHR Research Networks **cannot** be used for time spent on developing research protocols or to commission research. However, FSF that is allocated to NHS organisations (not all NHS Trusts qualify) can be used for protocol development and therefore it is suggested that you contact your Trust’s R&D Office or R&D Lead if you feel that you would like to apply for FSF that will be used for this purpose.

Any request associated with the topic areas of Diabetes, Cancer, Dementia & Neurodegenerative Diseases or Mental Health should be directed to the appropriate local TCRN in the first instance and the CLRN will need to be given evidence that the application has been rejected by the TCRNs before it will consider these applications.

The PCRN (Primary Care Research Network) for East of England also receives an allocation of FSF therefore if the research linked to your application is in Primary Care you may wish to pursue funding from the PCRN.

If contact details are required for the TCRNs or PCRN please contact West Anglia CLRN at [WestAngliaCLRN@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:WestAngliaCLRN@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) and we will put you in touch.

**For further information please refer to the following resources:**

Further information on NIHR Flexibility & Sustainability Funding:

[http://www.nihr.ac.uk/infrastructure/Pages/infrastructure\\_funding\\_flexibility.aspx](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/infrastructure/Pages/infrastructure_funding_flexibility.aspx)

Further information on NIHR Faculty Membership:

[http://www.nihr.ac.uk/faculty/Pages/faculty\\_membership.aspx](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/faculty/Pages/faculty_membership.aspx)

Further information about the West Anglia Comprehensive Local Research Network:

[http://www.ukcrn.org.uk/index/networks/comprehensive/clrns/west\\_anglia.html](http://www.ukcrn.org.uk/index/networks/comprehensive/clrns/west_anglia.html)